



Facts:



Bureau of Health Promotion, Tobacco Use Prevention Program
1-866-726-9926 (toll free)

Smokebusters was developed in 1999 by the Northeast Missouri Cancer Control Coalition to empower youth to take action to reduce tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke. It evolved into a three-year program with each year representing a graduation to higher-level achievement. The program addresses tobacco-use prevention in schools, homes and

communities by training groups of 8th - 12th grade students to educate other students in the classroom and adults in the community. The objective is to seek environmental and policy changes to reduce tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke.

More than 430 students from 34 schools are active in Northeastern Missouri. As a direct result of the efforts of Smokebusters students, eight schools adopted tobacco-free campus and events policies; 5 restaurants adopted smokefree policies; 1 city passed an ordinance for smokefree city

buildings; and, 1 park is now smokefree.

The success in Northeastern Missouri encouraged expansion of the Smokebusters program to other parts of the state in the 2004-05 school year. As of February 2005, there were 164 students from 22 schools in northwestern Missouri and 258 students from 23 schools in southeastern Missouri trained in year 1 of the program. More schools in these areas and throughout the state have indicated an interest in the program because of the results in neighboring school districts.

For more information about Smokebusters, contact the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, P.O. Box 570, Jefferson City, Missouri, 65102, telephone 1-866-726-9926.

PHASE 1

The team commitment to a 3-year project is established, and basic principles are mastered.

Objective: Empowering teens to be tobacco-free role models and introducing them to the possibility for change in their communities.

Students learn:

- characteristics of youth and adult audiences.
- the science of tobacco, the chemical make-up of tobacco and its negative effects on the human body, while identifying the positive aspects of being tobacco free.
- to identify tobacco advertising and promotion that is aimed at youth.
- to develop self-confidence to advocate for a tobacco-free society.

PHASE 2

Teams learn to advocate for tobacco-free communities.

Objective: Introducing team members to the rudiments of advocacy.

Students learn:

- to tailor effective messages for radio, television and print media.
- to develop relationships with local, state and governmental officials.
- to collaborate with school boards, city councils and elected officials to work toward tobacco-free schools and communities.

PHASE 3

Teams are ready to seek environmental and policy change in their communities.

Objective: Empowering youth advocates to change their communities.

Students learn:

- how the tobacco industry blocks attempts to strengthen local tobacco control policies.
- the truth about tobacco advertising.
- how to use the truth to educate the target audience.
- to develop the skills necessary to approach decision makers to ask for changes in tobacco control policies.
- to regenerate the youth groups by recruiting new members to begin another cycle of training and empowerment.